

Altruistic behaviour and subjective happiness based on gender

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the impact altruistic behaviour on subjective happiness based on gender. The total sample consists of 52 participants which include 21 males and 31 females. The age of participant varies from 18-40 years. The descriptive survey method was used for the present study and purposive sampling method adopted for sample selection. Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky, S. & Lepper, H. S,1999) and Altruistic Personality Scale (Rushton, J. P., Chrisjohn, R.D., & Fekken, G. C. (1981) were used for data collection. The data was analysed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 16 for windows. The finding showed that women had reported more altruistic behaviour than men. There are no gender differences reported on subjective happiness. Altruism and subjective satisfaction are not associated.

Keywords: *Positive Psychology, Altruistic behaviour, Subjective happiness*

In psychology, altruism is an important theme when coping with interpersonal relationships. It is described as both a sacrificial link with other individuals and a sacrificial effort to support other individuals. In nature, people with high altruism are voluntary, intentional, unselfish and constructive. It is formed as a result of contact with the world and other social interactions with individuals.

Biologically, altruism is inherited by nature. Both humans and animals are widely studied and found to minimize the suffering of another species (Rice & Gainer, 1962). It can also be used as the result of evolution (Novak, 2006). Some studies say that people who practice altruistic behavior often benefit from both physical and psychological benefits such as increased life satisfaction, increased self-esteem, decreased depression rates, hopelessness, and anxiety, as well as physical health and longevity (Post S.G, 2005). It also reduces negative feelings that affect the immune system, the endocrine system and the functioning of the cardiovascular system.

Since the 1970s, happiness has become a field of psychological science. Due to its complex existence, Martin Seligman introduced the concept of "subjective well-being" as its

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scientific synonym (Seligman, 2010). It is a subjective feeling and is an emotional expression of utmost importance. It is a popular psychological notion and is an important part of human life (Lyubomirsky, 2001).

People's happiness is attributed to both internal and external influences. External variables in psychology include socio-economic, demographic and ecological variables, where attitude, personality, environment perception and resilience are internal influences. It can also be accounted for to a large extent by personality features (Diener, 1984). Both emotional and cognitive components rely on it. The manner in which people spend their time often influences the amount of joy.

Positive psychology focuses on expanding the spectrum of psychological studies to support individuals by experiencing improved subjective well-being to have a better, meaningful, happier and fulfilled existence. Better subjective well-being needs more social actions. The relation between altruism and happiness has been established by several scientists (Diener & Seligman 2002). In particular, a study carried out by Martin Seligman shows that the joy of committing an act of disinterested kindness offers great satisfaction (Seligman, 2002). Joy and fulfillment are synonymous with passion and affection for others. A link between satisfaction and the performance of selfless actions has been identified by researchers.

Attitudinal expressions of compassion and good will towards others may also act as expressions of generativity that encourage meaningfulness and well-being in late life (Erikson, 1968). In psychological studies, measures of happiness have been developed and tested widely (Diener 1984).

Several studies indicate that different aspects of altruistic action have an immediate and long-term impact on mental health. Good mood states (Millar et al. 1988), decreased depression, and increased self-esteem are included. Engaging membership of non-profitable organisations in charitable events and using one's efforts to support others goes with a high degree of well-being.

Grateful thoughts also improve positive results and well-being according to McCullough et al. (2002) and Watkins et al. (2003). On the other hand, being concentrated on oneself leads to constant ruminations and thoughts and fears that are counterproductive to happiness and well-being.

People who minimize such tendencies, on the other hand, appreciate the quality of life more and their lives are filled with inner harmony, satisfaction, happiness and serenity as opposed to internal conflicts. Selfishness, self-centeredness, exaggerated individualism and narcissism are apparent opposing forces to altruism and therefore, happiness.

An significant component of mental health is happiness. Happiness can build optimistic mood states and decreased depression and improved sense of self-esteem. Altruism is a predictor of subjective satisfaction and any gender disparity in happiness and altruistic attitudes in the present sample.

The results of the study will lead to more studies in this field, helping to alter our current thinking about altruism and subjective happiness. In this context, the present study is highly important and meaningful.

MATERIALS & METHODS

The objectives of the present study are investigating the impact altruistic behaviour on subjective happiness based on gender. The descriptive survey method was used for the present study and purposive sampling method for sample selection. The total sample consists of 52 participants which include 21 males and 31 females. The participant's age ranges between 18-40 years. The data collection was carried out using the Subjective Satisfaction Scale (Lyubomirsky, S. & Lepper, H. S, 1999) and the Altruistic Personality Scale (Rushton, J. P., Chrisjohn, R.D., & Fekken, G. C. (1981). The data was analysed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 16 for windows.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Mean, standard deviation and "t" value of altruistic behaviour and subjective happiness based on gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Standard deviation	"t" Value	p
Altruism	Male	21	39.285	8.860	-2.454	0.05*
	Female	35	44.600	7.179		
Subjective Happiness	Male	21	13.666	1.425	-.724	.462
	Female	35	13.9429	1.304		

*Significant at 0.05 level

From the table 4.1, for altruism, the mean value is found to be 39.285 and standard deviation is 8.860 for males. For females, the mean value and standard deviation for altruism is found to be 44.6 and 7.179 respectively. the obtained "t" value for altruism is -2.454, which is statistically significant at 0.05 level So, it can be concluded that females have reported more, which is statistically significant at 0.05 level. So, it can be inferred that more were recorded by females. On average, women are more altruistic than men in experimental studies (Bolton & Katok (1995); Eckel and Grossman (1998); Andreoni & Vesterlund (2001); Dufwenberg & Muren (2006).

For subjective happiness, the mean value is found to be 13.666 and standard deviation is 1.425 for males. For females, the mean value and standard deviation for altruism is found to be 13.9429 and 1.304 respectively. The obtained "t" value for subjective happiness is -.724, which is not statistically significant. Although most happiness and general life satisfaction surveys show only marginal differences between men and women, women in some countries report slightly greater subjective well-being than men and slightly lower subjective well-being in others (Meisenberg, G., & Woodley, M. A. (2015).

Table 2: Pearson's coefficient of correlation between altruistic behaviour and subjective happiness based on gender.

Variables	Subjective happiness
Altruistic behaviour	-.217

From the table 2, the correlation matrix between altruistic behaviour and subjective happiness is found to be-.217 which is not statistically significant.

CONCLUSIONS

It is possible to accept altruistic behavior as a state of concern directed towards others. It is the act of supporting other individuals in return without expecting anything. It is necessary

for good cooperation and life among humans. It is a quality that both males and females should possess and it should evolve as the individual develops. The relation of altruism to subjective happiness was investigated in this research.

The research found that women are more altruistic than men. Women tend to think and judge more selflessly and are equal shareholders who choose to share equally. Females are much more concerned with volunteerism. But there is no connection between altruistic behavior and subjective happiness found in the research. It indicates that happiness or subjective well-being does not always evolve with individual altruistic behavior.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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